

Relationship Advice: Telltale Signs Your Relationship Is One of Convenience



By Toni Coleman, LCSW, CMC for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Relationships and marriages differ in many ways. What works for one couple would not be right for another. Therefore, there isn't one specific set of attributes or descriptors that could be used in a premarital checklist designed to ensure any marriage will be a successful one. However, there are certain traits that are commonly found in relationships that couples describe as happy and satisfying. These often have to do with specific dynamics and qualities that impact how they relate and communicate from day to day. When these are absent or lacking in some way, it can point to a union that continues

due to convenience rather than emotional, spiritual, and physical attachment. Here's some [relationship advice](#) that will help you classify your relationship as convenient or sent from Cupid.

Expert Relationship Advice On How To Tell If You're In A Relationship Out Of Convenience

1. You decided to marry because of your age, a desire for children, and/or social pressure to do so. People get married for many different reasons that can include peer or family pressure, age, a desire for children, practical concerns involving money and lifestyle, and/or a fear of being alone or never finding someone as good as one's partner. All of these are more about convenience than emotional attachment and love—even though both can be and are present in many relationships. If relationship problems, such as missing emotional attachment exist, couples often find that over time they feel restless, unfulfilled, and bored. These are major contributors to increasing alienation and emotional and physical infidelity because they may seek to meet their emotional needs outside of the relationship.

2. Your daily lives are more parallel than intertwined. This is when two people live essentially as roommates—sharing household responsibilities and interacting when needs or issues arise that require them to do so. As a relationship expert, I see that these couples may share coffee or the occasional meal, attend social and other events together, but they function as individuals rather than as a unit, lacking the cohesiveness and intimacy that is enjoyed by those with an intimate connection.

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3. Your conversations consist of topics related to scheduling, household coordination and or issues with finances, future planning and the children. When all of your conversations are pragmatic and skin deep, there is something missing. It's that tone in your partner's voice, the sharing of feelings and desires, those discussions about nothing or everything during which you feel close and connected.

4. You value the material and social benefits of your marriage over the relationship itself. If someone were to ask you why you like being married, what would you say? Would your thoughts immediately go to your home, material possessions, nice vacations, social status, friend group, household help, financial security, and/or the ability to choose work over staying home? If so, the glue that holds you together may be one of practicality and security, rather than emotional and physical affection and attachment.

5. You seek out others to meet your needs for friendship and companionship. Do you feel lonely at home? Do you actively seek out friendship with others because you and your spouse don't share this? Do you hate date nights? Are double or group dates the only ones you go on? Marriage to the wrong person can be very lonely, even lonelier than being single, as many singles have strong social networks that sustain them and help meet their needs. However, if your marriage is more of an arrangement, you will be spending most of your free time with someone you feel little in common with and/or have little or no desire to interact with.

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6. Sex is rare or non-existent, and you see it as your duty. Everyone's sex drive ebbs and flows over the course of a long-term relationship. We can't sustain the initial

excitement and highs we experienced when it was new, nor should we expect to. However, when we have an emotional connection with someone there is a desire for closeness, touch, and yes, sex. We also want to meet that other person's intimacy needs and therefore it doesn't feel like a chore. If it does, something critical is missing.

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7. A slippery slope—using alcohol to escape. If you feel the need to numb yourself, find ways to get distance, and/or use alcohol or other substances to escape your day to day reality—your relationship is in trouble. When we feel connected to our partner we seek more closeness. The sound of their voice, that feeling we have when they walk in the room, that little thrill we feel when they reach out and offer a hug or a caress are all signs that a relationship is strong and that the intimate connection is there.

If the above signs resonate with you—you have a choice to make. You can choose to continue in a union that satisfies your needs for comfort, predictability and security; or you can ask your partner to sit down with you and have that long overdue talk about how you are both feeling and how the relationship is or is not meeting your intimacy needs. This conversation would be an ice breaker and only the beginning of more discussion about what each of you wants that you aren't getting from one another and from your relationship. From there, my relationship advice is to establish goals and identify resources to help you work and grow together as a team. This would require a willingness to be open and vulnerable, and seeking out professional help may be essential to helping you get and stay on track. Success will rest on the strength of your joint commitment and ability to make the relationship one of your top priorities.

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